



HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

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HOUSE DEMOCRATS OFFER AMENDMENT TO EASE CRISIS OF UNINSURED FLORIDIANS

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Florida House Democratic Caucus members today offered an amendment that would provide affordable, meaningful health coverage to more than 1 million people who either don't qualify for Medicare because of their age or are too poor to obtain healthcare from private insurers.

A two-sentence amendment presented by **House Democratic Leader Pro Tempore Mia Jones** (D-Jacksonville) in a House budget committee today would allow for an expansion of Florida's existing state-federal healthcare partnership by accepting all available federal funds to modernize Florida's four-decade-old Medicaid program under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA).

The amendment would expand coverage to Floridians with an income of up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level. For an individual, that's an income of about \$15,282, and for a family of three, it's earnings of \$25,975 a year. Under Jones' amendment, both families and individuals who meet the income criteria would be covered.

Over the course of 10 years, Florida is eligible to receive under PPACA more than \$50 billion in federal money toward health-coverage expansion, and for the first three years, the federal government would provide the full cost of care for these newly eligible working Floridians. After that, the federal share gradually reduces to 90 percent in 2020 and beyond.

House Democrats have been joined by numerous business groups, health care industry leaders, medical providers, as well as a bipartisan array of elected

officials, including Republican Governor Rick Scott, in endorsing the use of federal funds for health-coverage expansion.

With roughly 1 in 5 Floridians lacking health coverage, Leader Jones' amendment recognizes that expanding health coverage in a way that continues Florida's state-federal partnership will:

- * Save lives;
- * Increase prevention and wellness care that is more cost effective than emergency room treatments;
- * Create much-needed quality jobs throughout Florida; and will
- * Bring Florida's tax dollars to work in our state.

House Democratic Leader Pro Tempore Mia Jones provided the following statement about the proposal:

"I am pleased to have presented a health coverage solution that would save lives and improve health outcomes by continuing Florida's state-federal healthcare partnership," said Jones. "I remain confident that despite today's vote on the amendment, a viable bipartisan solution is in reach this legislative session to ease the crisis of uninsured Floridians."